



Sudan

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - [2003](#)

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Sudan has an authoritarian government in which all effective political power was in the hands of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir. Bashir and his party have controlled the Government since he led a 1989 military coup, with the instigation and support of the fundamentalist National Islamic front (NIF). In 1999, Bashir broke with the ideological leader of the NIF, Hassan al-Turabi, disbanded Parliament, suspended parts of the 1998 presidentially decreed Constitution, and declared a state of national emergency that abrogated basic liberties; in December, the state of emergency was extended for another year. In 2000, Bashir was reelected and his political party, the National Congress/National Islamic Front (NC/NIF), won 340 out of 360 seats in the Parliament in deeply flawed presidential and parliamentary elections that all major opposition parties boycotted. Turabi's popular National Congress Party (PNC) was disestablished and continued to be a proscribed political organization. NC/NIF members and supporters continued to hold key positions in the Government, security forces, judiciary, academic institutions, trade unions, professional associations, and the media. The major opposition political parties for the most part remained marginalized from the political process; however, as the peace negotiations progressed during the year, opposition parties became more vocal in their demand for inclusion, and the Government sought their support to add legitimacy to the agreements. The judiciary was not independent and was subject to government influence.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), under Kenyan leadership, continued to work towards an end to the country's civil war. After several unsuccessful peace efforts, in July 2002, the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) signed the historic Machakos Protocol that resolved two of the most contentious issues in the civil war: The role of religion and the state during an interim period and the right of self-determination for the south. The terms of the Protocol called for a 6½-year interim period and a referendum for southerners in which they could vote to remain unified with the north or vote for secession. In October 2002, the parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that called for a cessation of hostilities and unimpeded humanitarian access to all areas of the country, and which both parties largely have respected; however, at year's end, access to the Darfur region was restricted due to the conflict. Peace talks resumed and continued during the year, and on September 25, First Vice President Ali Osman Taha signed a security agreement with John Garang, the leader of the SPLM/A. Discussions regarding wealth sharing and the three contested areas were ongoing at year's end.

In addition to the regular police and the Sudan People's Armed Forces, the Government maintained an external security force, an internal security force, a militia known as the Popular Defense Forces (PDF), and a number of police forces. The security forces were under the effective control of the Government. Members of the security forces committed numerous, serious human rights abuses.

The country's mostly agricultural economy continued to be crippled by the civil war, destruction of infrastructure, economic mismanagement, and the existence of more than 4 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in a country of an estimated 30 million persons. The infusion of Islamic banking and financial assets as well as increased revenue from oil production injected new capital into some sectors of the economy; however, corruption, mismanagement, and increasing military expenditures limited the impact. The country continued taking some steps towards transitioning from a socialist to a market-based economy; however, the Government and NC supporters remained heavily involved in the economy. The Government took important steps to reform its finance and foreign exchange systems. Approximately 86 percent of the labor force was engaged in agriculture.

The Government's human rights record remained extremely poor, and although there were improvements in some areas, numerous, serious abuses remained. Citizens did not have the ability to change their government peacefully. Security forces and associated militias were responsible for extrajudicial killings and disappearances. Security forces regularly beat, harassed, arbitrarily arrested, and detained incommunicado opponents or suspected

opponents of the Government, and there were reports of torture. Security forces and associated militias beat refugees, raped women abducted during raids, and harassed and detained persons. Government security forces and pro-government militias acted with impunity. The Civilian Protection Monitoring Team (CPMT), created by agreement between the two parties subsequent to the Machakos Protocol, and the Joint Military Commission operating in the Nuba Mountains, had some success in monitoring and curbing serious abuses during the year. Government and government-supported militia committed serious abuses in response to rebel attacks in the Darfur region during the year, including razing numerous villages. As a result, as many as 3,000 unarmed civilians were killed, more than 600,000 civilians were internally displaced, and an estimated 100,000 refugees fled to neighboring Chad by year's end.

Prison conditions remained harsh and life threatening, and prolonged detention was a problem. The authorities did not ensure due process in civilian or military courts. The Government continued to infringe on citizens' privacy rights. The Government still did not fully apply the laws of war to the southern insurgency, has taken few prisoners of war (POWs), and did not cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) regarding access to or treatment of POWs. Cooperation with U.N.-sponsored relief operations generally was poor, although there was some improvement. Humanitarian relief flights had significantly improved access throughout the south during the year; however, government forces continued to obstruct the flow of humanitarian assistance, particularly to the Darfur region. Restrictions on press freedom under the National Security Emergency decree increased as the Government suspended publications and closed newspapers during the year. The Government frequently arrested editors and journalists who criticized or disagreed with government policy. The Government continued to severely restrict the freedoms of speech, assembly, association, religion, and movement, and arrested and harassed those who exercised these rights. The Government continued the Islamization and Arabization of the country, and there were credible allegations of forced Islamization of non-Muslims. Local human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were routinely harassed and arrested. Violence and discrimination against women and abuse of children remained problems. Female genital mutilation (FGM) remained widespread. Discrimination and violence against religious and ethnic minorities and government restrictions on worker rights persisted. Security forces and associated militias were responsible for forced labor (including forced child labor), the abduction of women and children, and the forced military conscription of underage young men. Child labor was widespread. Slavery and trafficking in persons remained significant problems.

Antigovernment insurgent groups and associated militia forces also continued to commit numerous, serious abuses. There were reports of SPLM/A violations of citizens' rights. During the year, the SPLM/A was responsible for killings, beatings, rape, arbitrary detention, and forced military conscription of underage young men. The SPLM/A continued to manipulate humanitarian assistance for military advantage.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were no reports of political killings during the year; however, there were numerous reports of extrajudicial killings. Government forces and allied militia continued to pursue a scorched earth policy aimed at removing populations from the areas of the oil pipeline and oil production, and violence in Darfur increased significantly. The Government attacked civilian facilities and housing, which resulted in numerous civilian deaths, including of children (see Section 1.g.). Deaths resulted from landmines during the year (see Section 1.g.).

Government-supported militias raided villages in Darfur, driving thousands of refugees from their lands and many over the border into Chad (see Sections 1.g. and 2.d.). However, government-supported militias stopped raiding Dinka villages in Bahr el-Ghazal, killing men, abducting women and children, and destroying and looting property following the February signing of the Addendum to the MOU on Cessation of Hostilities (see Section 1.g.).

Forced conscriptions resulted in the death of at least one person during the year (see Section 5). The CPMT reported that on June 25, South Sudan Democratic Forces (SSDF) militia abducted and severely beat two civilians and two militiamen in Omdurman Souk. Civilian James Ran Kai died as a result of the beating while in the custody of the militia. The other three persons were released at the beginning of August. By year's end, the Government had not taken any action against those responsible in the SSDF.

At least one person died as a result of torture while in the custody of government security forces. In May, according to the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT), security forces arrested Jum'a Omer Alnur, a tailor and political activist in Dongola, in the north. He and five other men, all Nubans, were subjected to torture while in custody. Alnur was reportedly tortured with a water pipe, electric wire, and acid. On June 26, he slipped into a coma after

being admitted to Khartoum hospital. Awad Ibrahim Gawar, another of the men, died after 24 hours in custody; no medical assessment was made after his death. By year's end, the Government had not taken any action in response to the incidents.

Police killed persons while forcibly dispersing demonstrations (see Section 2.b.).

There was no known action taken, nor was any likely to be taken, in the reported 2001 cases of security force killings.

During the year, there was a decrease in the number of political and other killings reportedly committed by rebel forces in areas of active conflict, such as the Nuba Mountains and northern Bahr el-Ghazal during the year; however, details generally were unavailable. Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that SPLM/A forces and allied militias summarily executed persons in the southern part of the country. There were no reports that the SPLM/A and allied militias laid landmines following the April ceasefire (see Section 1.g.). There were reports of Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) killings in Darfur (see Section 1.g.).

There was no known action taken, nor was any likely to be taken, in the reported 2002 or 2001 killings by rebel forces in the south.

There were reports of interethnic and intraethnic violence that resulted in deaths in Khartoum. On July 22, according to CPMT reports, fighting in the Kalakla area between two government-aligned militias--that of Paulino Matieb and Peter Gadet--resulted in two deaths and nine injuries, including reportedly four civilians. Police intervened, and approximately 22 militia members were arrested and charged with rioting, disturbance of the peace, and causing harm to others.

b. Disappearance

There were continued allegations that the Government was responsible for the arrest and subsequent disappearance of persons suspected of supporting rebels in government-controlled zones in the south, the Nuba Mountains, and in the Darfur region.

There were reports that during raids on civilian settlements, government forces and government-supported militia abducted persons, including women and children, for use as domestic servants, forced labor, or sex slaves (see Sections 1.g. and 6.c.). In the last approximately 15 years, an estimated 15,000 Dinka women and children have been abducted; between 10,000 and 12,000 persons, primarily Dinka, remained abducted or unaccounted for at year's end. Observers believed that some of those abducted were sold into slavery, while others were used as forced labor or drafted into the military. In some cases, the abductees escaped or eventually were released or ransomed; however, in other cases, they were killed.

The Kenya-based Rift Valley Institute documented more than 11,000 persons abducted by government-supported militia in northern Bahr el-Ghazal during the last 20 years, more than 90 percent of whom were still missing at year's end. According to the report, only 528 of those documented were known to have survived and returned home.

There was no known action taken, nor was any likely to be taken, in the reported 2001 cases of disappearances.

The Committee to Eradicate the Abduction of Women and Children (CEAWAC) continued to report a lack of necessary funding to document, rescue, and transport abductees back to their families. During 2002, CEAWAC formed 22 joint-tribal committees, conducted 2 field missions resulting in the documentation of more than 150 cases of abduction, and transported 26 to a facility in Fulla until their families could be located; however, the facility in Fulla was closed during the year. CEAWAC reported that 300 abductees returned during the year. The Government did not publicly identify the abductors or forced labor owners and chose not to prosecute them.

In May 2002, the International Eminent Persons Group completed its investigation into the extent of slavery, abductions, and associated abuses by government and SPLA forces in the conflict. The Group concluded that armed pro-government militias were responsible for committing these crimes and operated with virtual impunity. The Group also concluded that abductions met prescribed definitions of slavery; however, the Group was unable to determine the scale of abduction and enslavement. The group made several suggestions to stem abductions; some of these suggestions were implemented during the year. For example, the rail line from Babanusa, via Aweil, through SPLM/A-held territory, to Wau, which was directly linked to slave trading, was shut down in 2002 and remained suspended at year's end.

There continued to be reports of abductions by SPLA forces and allied militias. The CPMT reported the systemic abuse of civilians, including abductions, along the Eritrean border under National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and SPLA control. For example, the CPMT reported that in March, two civilians were abducted near the village of Deresta, northeast of Kassala, and subsequently released. Follow-up on the reports was hindered by a lack of cooperation by SPLM/A allied groups and general insecurity of the region.

There was at least one report during the year that rebel forces in Darfur abducted persons. On November 13, one government humanitarian aid worker and four others working for an independent relief organization near Geneina town in Western Darfur were reportedly abducted. The four nongovernmental workers were reportedly released by the end of November; however, at year's end, there was no information available on the status of the government employee.

There also were reports of periodic intertribal abductions of women and children in the Eastern Upper Nile (see Section 5).

The LRA kidnapped Ugandan children and took them to the southern part of the country (see Section 6.f.).

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The Constitution prohibits torture; however, government security forces continued to torture, beat, and harass suspected opponents and others. Impunity continued to be a serious problem.

In accordance with Shari'a, the Criminal Act provides for physical punishments including flogging, amputation, stonings, and "crucifixion"--the public display of a body after execution. The Government officially exempted the 10 southern states, in which the population was mostly non-Muslim, from parts of the law that permit physical punishments based on Shari'a. There were no reports of court-ordered Shari'a punishments, other than lashings, in government-controlled areas of the south. The law legally can be applied in the south, if the state assemblies approve it.

On May 17, a 14-year-old girl, unmarried and 9 months pregnant, was sentenced to 100 lashes of the whip on charges of adultery. The man charged in connection with this case was acquitted because of lack of evidence. The girl was appealing the sentence at year's end.

In June, a 13-year-old girl in Nyala was sentenced to 30 lashes for not wearing socks, and the sentence was carried out the same day.

On October 14, according to the OMCT-affiliated Sudanese Organization Against Torture, Nyala Special Court in Darfur sentenced Mohamed Hassan Hamdan, a 16-year-old nomad belonging to the Ja'afra tribe, to "cross amputation" (amputation of the right hand and left foot). Mohamed Hassan Hamdan was convicted for armed robbery (hiraba). Five other individuals were also accused of armed robbery in August near the Rehaid Albirdi area, southwest of Nyala, but Mohamed Hassan Hamdan was the only one convicted. An appeal was reportedly filed that was pending at year's end.

On December 29, the Nyala criminal court sentenced Sanousi Alhaj Ismaeal to death by hanging without due process. Ismaeal was arrested on August 30 and accused of killing a man. The OMCT reported that police officers allegedly tortured Ismaeal to force him to confess.

At year's end, there was no information available on the status of 14 prisoners charged with armed robbery and sentenced to death by hanging in May 2002.

Amnesty International (AI) and others continued to report on a number of student victims of torture during the year. It was confirmed during the year that security forces beat and otherwise abused students arrested in Khartoum during demonstrations at Khartoum and Bahr el-Ghazal Universities in October 2002. Student leaders and others deemed to be opponents of the Government were singled out for particularly harsh treatment.

There was no further development in the following 2002 cases: the November pro-government Islamic student militia's beating of students at Khartoum University, and the student militia's attack of student hostels in Shambat.

At least one person died as a result of torture while in the custody of government security forces (see Section 1.a.).

There were reports that government security forces tortured and beat persons suspected of supporting the rebels in Darfur, including making detainees stand all night in a crowded room and holding a detainee's head under water.

On August 12, security forces in Kass arrested and severely beat 24 men suspected of supporting the rebels in Darfur. On September 9, security forces released all but two of the men. There was no known action taken against the responsible members of the security forces by year's end. No additional information was available at year's end.

Refugees were subjected to beatings and mistreatment by security forces.

Soldiers, PDF members, and pro-government militia forces raped women (see Section 1.g.).

During the year, security forces injured persons while forcibly dispersing demonstrations (see Section 2.b.).

There was no information at year's end in the 2001 cases of Sebit Hassan Ramadan or Osman Robon, and no action was taken against members of security forces who tortured, beat, raped, or otherwise abused persons in 2002 or 2001.

Government forces and allied militias were responsible for injuring many civilians during attacks on rebel forces, during raids on civilian settlements, and during bomb attacks on civilian targets (see Section 1.g.). There were reports that persons abducted during raids were subjected to torture, rape, and forced servitude (see Section 6.c.).

SPLM/A and affiliated forces were responsible for a number of civilian injuries and for raping women (see Section 1.g.).

There was no further information on the SPLA-affiliated forces' attack on IDPs at Mbiya and rape and other abuses in Raga, Western Bahr el-Ghazal.

Conditions in government prisons remained harsh, overcrowded, and life threatening. Most prisons were old and poorly maintained, and many lacked basic facilities such as toilets or showers. Health care was primitive, and food was inadequate. Prison officials arbitrarily denied family visits to prisoners. High-ranking political prisoners reportedly often enjoyed better conditions than did other prisoners.

The Government routinely mistreated persons in custody. There were reports that security forces held detainees incommunicado, beat detainees, deprived them of food, water, and toilets, and forced them to sleep on cold floors. In May, according to AI, security forces seriously beat detained students from Zalingei University; some of the students were hospitalized.

At year's end, the July 2002 death sentence for the 88 persons from Nyala who were seriously beaten while in custody had not been carried out.

Female prisoners were housed separately from men, and rape in prison reportedly was rare.

Minors often were held with adults. In order to care for their children, many women prisoners were forced to take their children with them into the prison, where the children were unable to receive an education. In December, it was reported that more than 100 women and 50 children were incarcerated at Omdurman prison with some of the women still awaiting trial. Accurate figures were unavailable. At holiday times, the prisons tended to release women and children, although they were subject to re-arrest for continuing criminal activities, such as brewing and selling of homemade alcoholic beverages.

The Government did not permit regular visits to prisons by human rights observers. No independent domestic human rights organizations monitored prison conditions.

During several months during the year, the ICRC was not allowed access to POWs in the south; however, by year's end, they were able to access all POWs.

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The law prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention without charge; however, in practice, the Government continued to

use arbitrary arrest and detention under the state of emergency provisions.

There are a number of police forces, including regular police units, the Popular Police Force (PPF), and Public Order Police (POP). Effectiveness varied depending on the strength of the local militias and security forces. Police corruption was a problem, and police officers supplemented their incomes by bribing the local civilians. The PPF is a parallel pro-government force that received higher pay than the regular police. The POP is a law enforcement entity that enforced Islamic law (Shari'a), including enforcing proper social behavior such as restrictions on alcohol and "immodest dress."

Under the Constitution and the Criminal Code, an individual may be detained for 3 days without charge, which can be extended for 30 days by order of the Director of Security and another 30 days by the Director of Security with the approval of the prosecuting attorney. Under the amended National Security Act, which supercedes the Criminal Code, when an individual is accused of violating national security, that individual may be detained for 3 months without charge, and the detention is renewable by the Director of Security for another 3 months. Under the state of emergency, the Government is not constrained by the National Security Act and reportedly detained individuals indefinitely without judicial review. Persons arrested by security forces often were held incommunicado for long periods of time in unknown locations without access to their lawyers or family members.

The law allows for bail, except for those accused of crimes punishable by death or life imprisonment, and there was a functioning bail system during the year.

In general, the Government detained persons for a few days before releasing them without charge or trial; however, detentions of persons perceived as political opponents generally were much longer. There were reports that security forces tortured, detained without charge, and held incommunicado political opponents (see Sections 1.a and 1.c.). Security forces arrested numerous persons suspected of supporting the rebels in Darfur (see Section 1.g.), some of whom were tried, convicted, and sentenced to death under Special Courts (see Section 1.e.). Security forces frequently harassed political opponents by summoning them for questioning, forcing them to remain during the day without questioning, and then ordering them to return the following day. This process sometimes continued for weeks.

Authorities continued to detain political opponents of the Government during the year. For example, in November, security forces arrested Osman Fagarai, police general and the Secretary General of the Internal Bija Congress, and detained him for approximately 1 month without charges. Fagarai was arrested after he made a statement (later published in the local press) that the suffering of the Bija's was worse than that of the people of Darfur and he asked the Bijas and Darfurians to join in demanding their participation in power and wealth sharing as negotiated with the South.

In August, President Bashir promised to release all political detainees as part of peace talks with the rebel SPLM/A. By November, a number of political prisoners were released, including Hassan Al-Turabi, former Speaker of the National Assembly and head of the PNC. However, security forces detained a number of persons after Turabi's release, including many from Darfur. An undetermined number of Darfurians remained in detention at year's end (see Section 1.g.).

A number of journalists were arrested and detained during the year (see Section 2.a.).

Members of NGOs and civil society groups were arrested and detained during the year (see Section 4).

Security forces continued to detain persons because of their religious beliefs and activities (see Section 2.c.). Detentions based nominally on religion generally were of limited duration; however, the Government routinely accused persons arrested for religious reasons of common crimes and national security crimes, which resulted in prolonged detention.

Security forces often targeted southern women in IDP camps because they produced and sold a traditional home-brewed alcohol. Such women were arrested and imprisoned for up to 6 months under Shari'a (see Section 1.c.).

Vagrant children who committed crimes were detained for indefinite periods (see Section 5).

It was estimated the SPLM/A retained several hundred POWs in indefinite detention at year's end (see Section 1.c.).

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that SPLM/A officials detained local staff members of international humanitarian organizations.

The law prohibits forced exile, and the Government did not use it. Opposition leaders remained in self-imposed exile in Cairo, Asmara, and other locations during the year.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; however, the judiciary was largely subservient to the Government or the President, especially in cases of crimes against the state. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was nominated by a Judiciary Committee and appointed by the President. As the senior judge in the judicial service, the Chief Justice also controlled the judiciary. On occasion, courts displayed a degree of independence. For example, appeals courts on several occasions overturned decisions of lower courts in political cases, particularly decisions from public order courts.

The President appoints the Constitutional Court's seven members. The judicial system includes four types of courts: Regular courts; military courts; special courts; and tribal courts. Tribal courts were in place in rural areas to resolve disputes over land and water rights, and family matters. Within the regular court system, there are civil and criminal courts, appeals courts, and the Supreme Court. Special Security Courts were abolished during the year; however, the Government created Special Courts in Darfur under the state of emergency to try crimes against the state. The Criminal Act governs criminal cases, and the Civil Transactions Act applies in most civil cases. Shari'a is applied in the north. There continued to be reports that non-Muslims were prosecuted and convicted under Shari'a "hudud" laws. Courts did not apply Shari'a formally in the south. Public order cases were heard in criminal courts.

The Constitution provides for fair and prompt trials; however, this was not respected in practice in many cases. Trials in regular courts nominally met international standards of legal protections. The accused normally have the right to an attorney, and the courts are required to provide free legal counsel for indigent defendants accused of crimes punishable by death or life imprisonment; however, there were reports that defendants frequently did not receive legal counsel and that counsel in some cases could only advise the defendant and not address the court. Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that the courts refused to allow certain lawyers, including Ghazi Suleiman, to represent defendants.

Only military personnel were tried in military courts. Unlike in the previous year, there were no known cases of civilians tried in military courts. Military trials, which sometimes were secret and brief, did not provide procedural safeguards. Military trials sometimes have taken place with no attorney permitted and did not provide an effective appeal from a death sentence. Witnesses may be permitted to appear at military trials.

The Special Courts Act created special three-person security courts to deal with a wide range of offenses, including violations of constitutional decrees, emergency regulations, some sections of the Penal Code, as well as drug and currency offenses. Special courts, composed primarily of civilian judges, handled most security-related cases. Attorneys could advise defendants as "friends of the court" but normally could not address the court. Lawyers complained that they sometimes were granted access to court documents too late to prepare an effective defense. Sentences usually were severe and implemented at once; however, death sentences were referred to the Chief Justice and the Head of State. Defendants could file appellate briefs with the Chief Justice. Special Courts were in operation during the year in Darfur, as allowed under the state of emergency.

Emergency tribunals, composed primarily of military judges, continued to try "banditry" cases in the western part of the country. Defendants were not permitted access to legal representation. The emergency tribunals ordered sentences such as death by stoning and amputations during the year. Sentences were carried out quickly, with only 1 week allowed for appeal to the district chief justice; there were reports that persons were executed the day after sentencing. Emergency tribunals ordered executions during the year.

Lawyers who wished to practice must maintain membership in the government-controlled Bar Association. The Government continued to harass and detain members of the legal profession who it viewed as political opponents. For example, in August, a lawyer who protested in a handbill the bombing of civilians in Habilla in west Darfur was arrested and detained in September. He was eventually released in October after the Government released political prisoners.

Civil authorities and institutions did not operate in parts of the rebel-held south and the Nuba Mountains. Parts of the south and the Nuba Mountains fell outside effective judicial procedures and other governmental functions. According to credible reports, government units summarily tried and punished those accused of crimes, especially

for offenses against civil order.

Magistrates in SPLM/A-held areas followed a penal code roughly based on the 1925 Penal Code. The SPLM has a judicial system of county magistrates, county judges, regional judges, and a court of appeals. While officials have been appointed for most of these positions, the court system did not function in many areas due to lack of infrastructure, communications, funding, and an effective police force. Some cases were heard at the magistrate and county levels. The SPLM recognized traditional courts or "Courts of Elders," which usually heard matters of personal affairs such as marriages and dowries, and based their decisions on traditional and customary law. Local chiefs usually presided over traditional courts. Traditional courts particularly were active in Bahr el-Ghazal. In rural areas outside effective SPLM control, tribal chiefs applied customary laws.

After a presidential announcement in October, the Government freed a number of political detainees, including Turabi; however, security forces continued to detain numerous persons suspected of supporting the rebels in Darfur.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The Constitution prohibits such actions; however, the Government routinely violated these rights in practice. Security forces frequently conducted night searches without warrants and targeted persons suspected of political crimes. Government forces occupied PNC offices during most of the year; however, the offices were returned to the PNC following the release of Turabi from prison. The Government also occupied the offices of a Nuban women's group in the north (see Section 2.d.), and security forces searched the residences of persons suspected of making alcoholic beverages, which were illegal under Islamic law (see Section 1.d.).

Security personnel routinely opened and read mail and monitored telephones. The Government continued to officially restrict the ownership of satellite dishes by private citizens through use of its licensing requirement; however, satellite dishes were widely available. A wide network of government informants conducted pervasive surveillance in schools, universities, markets, workplaces, and neighborhoods.

The Government razed an increased number of squatter and IDP dwellings during the year, many in a purported re-zoning plan, but without any interim plans for the thousands of persons affected. For example, in October, the Government destroyed 500 households in Salaheen, 600 in Zubera, 418 in Ebet Khitim, and 420 in Omer Mukhtar.

Government forces pursued a scorched earth policy aimed at removing populations from around the oil pipeline and other oil production facilities, which resulted in deaths and serious injuries (see Section 1.g.). The Government also forcibly removed persons during the year around the oil pipeline during the year. For example, in July, the Government forced more than 100 families in Kordofan at gunpoint to leave their land. The Government told the families new plots would be provided in Khartoum; however, the families had received no new land and no compensation by year's end.

Government armed forces and allied militias burned and looted villages and stole cattle (see Section 1.g.).

The Government continued to conscript citizens forcibly for military service, including high school age children (see Section 5).

A Muslim man may marry a non-Muslim, but a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim, unless he converts to Islam (see Section 5); however, this prohibition was not observed or enforced universally, particularly in the south and among Nubans. Non-Muslims may adopt only non-Muslim children; no such restrictions apply to Muslim parents.

The insurgent SPLM/A generally was not known to interfere with privacy, family, home, or correspondence in areas that it controlled; however, rebel factions continued to conscript citizens forcibly, including high school age children.

During the year, there continued to be unconfirmed reports that the SPLA forcibly recruited Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda for service in their forces.

g. Use of Excessive Force and Violations of Humanitarian Law in Internal and External Conflicts

Since the civil war resumed in 1983, more than 2 million persons have been killed, and more than 4 million persons displaced, including 2 million in Khartoum alone, as a result of fighting between the Government and insurgents in the south, interethnic conflict, and famine. In February, the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) emerged in Darfur as

the primary armed opposition in a violent conflict with the Government.

In the southern war zone, the SPLA controlled large areas of the states of Equatoria, Bahr el-Ghazal, and Upper Nile and also operated in the southern portions of the states of Darfur, Kordofan, and Blue Nile. The Government controlled a number of the major southern towns and cities, including Juba, Wau, and Malakal. During the year, military activity decreased throughout the south, especially following the signing of the Addendum to the MOU on Cessation of Hostilities in February. All sides in the fighting were responsible for violations of humanitarian human rights abuses and violations. The SPLM/A and its northern allies controlled the border area with Eritrea and continued to occupy the symbolically important town of Hamesh Khoreb. The Government continued efforts to strengthen its control of the oil producing areas in Western Upper Nile.

As part of the Agreement on the Protection of Civilians from intentional military attack, the Government and the SPLA agreed to allow the international community to form the CPMT. Located in Rumbek and Khartoum, the team was staffed with expert personnel experienced in investigating allegations of military attacks against civilians. The team investigated numerous violations, and found that both sides committed human rights abuses during the year.

Government forces routinely killed, injured, and displaced civilians, and destroyed clinics and dwellings intentionally during offensive operations. There were confirmed reports that government-supported militia intentionally attacked noncombatant civilians, looted their possessions, and destroyed their villages. Despite having signed a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement with the SPLM in October, the Government and allied militia launched a series of military actions in December 2002.

In February, the CPMT investigated the deaths, abductions, and displacement of civilians, and looting and destruction of villages in the Western Upper Nile in December 2002 and January; however, the CPMT was unable to determine if government or SPLM/A forces were responsible for initiating the attacks. The CPMT also initiated an investigation into the military attacks that took place in Western Upper Nile at year's end.

The CPMT investigated the May attack on Longochok and nearby villages and reported that evidence strongly suggested it was the SPLM/A and an element of the Fellata, not the Government or government-supported militia forces, that contributed to an indeterminate number of deaths, displacement of civilians, and destruction and looting of civilian property.

Scorched earth tactics by the Government and government-supported forces along parts of the oil pipeline and around some key oil facilities decreased significantly after the signing of the Addendum to the MOU in February. These forces seriously injured persons, destroyed villages, and drove out inhabitants to create an uninhabited security zone. There was a significant decrease in indiscriminate government bombing of civilian locations in the south throughout the year. Such bombings often were associated with military actions by both sides or continuing government efforts to clear the population from near the oil producing areas in Western Upper Nile and adjacent areas.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that the Government's PDF militia attacked several villages in northern Bahr el-Ghazal.

There was continued violence on the Bentiu-Adok Road. In fighting that began in December 2002 and continued during the year, the CPMT team reported that government soldiers moving south from Bentiu along the road to Leer killed and beat civilians and raped women; thousands of civilians were forcibly displaced. The CPMT also reported that in January, the Government and government-supported militia attacked on multiple occasions the areas of Lara, Tam, Nhialdou, Leel, and the villages south of Mayom and Mankien, including the use of aerial bombings. The attacks resulted in the death and injury of civilians, the destruction and looting of property, and the displacement of persons.

Although the flow of humanitarian assistance to the south increased during the year, there continued to be reports of restrictions, including on aid delivery to Juba and Bahr al-Ghazal (Jabel). Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that the Government targeted NGOs in bombing raids.

There were no reports that the Government prosecuted or otherwise penalized attacking militias or made efforts to protect civilian victims from attacks; government forces provided logistic and transportation support, and weapons and ammunition to pro-government militias throughout the country.

There was no known action taken in the 2002 and 2001 cases of government aerial bombings, or against the PDF members responsible for abuses by year's end. There was no further action on the government investigation into

the February 2002 government helicopter gunship attack on a World Food Program (WFP) distribution compound in Bieh, Western Upper Nile, killing 17 civilians and injuring dozens of other persons.

Government and government-supported forces and SPLM/A affiliated forces raped women and forcibly conscripted men and boys (see Section 5).

Despite an agreement to stop using anti-personnel mines, during the year both sides continued to lay mines. Deaths and injuries continued to occur during the year from landmines previously laid by the Government to protect garrison towns and from landmines left by the SPLM/A and its allies during the war. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) reported that at year's end, both the Government and the SPLM/A had only provided information on the boundaries of minefields and mined routes, without any maps, detailed information or numbers of landmines.

Deaths resulted from landmines during the year. For example, on October 3, eight persons were killed and two injured when a landmine-removal team drove over a landmine in the Nuba Mountains, an area controlled by the SPLA.

Government forces routinely killed rebels from the south captured in battle. Only a small group of prisoners captured before the 1989 coup and a few rebels from the south taken in the east in 1998 reportedly were held as POWs in government-controlled areas. The Government did not admit that it held POWs and did not return any POWs during the year. It has not responded to ICRC inquiries about POWs and has refused the ICRC access to POWs.

Problems with relief flights in the south were caused by the Government's denials of visas or work permits to foreign humanitarian workers as well as aircraft clearances to the U.N.'s Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). Humanitarian relief flights enjoyed significantly improved access throughout the south, although there were initial difficulties in opening up humanitarian access to Southern Blue Nile, an area traditionally outside the mandate of the OLS. Such difficulties were resolved through an agreement between the Government and OLS during the year; however, complete unrestricted access, particularly in the areas of Southern Blue Nile and the east, was not granted.

On April 26, the Nile River corridor was re-opened for the transport of humanitarian assistance and in May, WFP used a cross line barge operation to deliver food for the first time since 1998. In April, the first cross-line road delivery of food assistance to the Nuba Mountains started.

In September, the Government announced new travel regulations to make it easier for humanitarian assistance organizations to travel as necessary through the south; however, travel difficulties remained, and some officials reportedly were disregarding the new rules.

The SPLM/A and allied insurgent forces routinely displaced, killed, and injured civilians, raped women, and destroyed clinics and dwellings intentionally. For example, the CPMT reported that on June 6, the SPLM/A participated in the attack and recapture of the town of Akobo, Bieh State, which resulted in an undetermined number of civilian deaths and injuries.

The SPLM/A has taken a number of POWs over the years and often cooperated with the ICRC, allowing them regular visits to the POWs (see Section 1.c.). The SPLM/A released a limited number of POWs for humanitarian reasons during the year.

There were credible reports of SPLM/A taxation and diversion of relief supplies. The SPLM/A leadership repeatedly committed itself to eliminating these problems; however, in practice it appeared unable to consistently impose those commitments on its forces in the field. Unlike during the previous year, there were no reports that SPLA-allied forces attacked international relief organizations.

A Joint Military Commission monitored a ceasefire in the Nuba Mountains. Conditions in the Nuba Mountains region continued to improve and IDPs began to return to the area during the year.

Violence increased in the Darfur region during the year. The conflict stemmed from SLA and JEM allegations of government neglect of the region and ethnic tensions between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farming communities, which have been exacerbated by scarce resources and the Government's support of the nomad militias. In February, the SLA inaugurated a campaign of attacks against government installations, police barracks, and Khartoum-installed leaders. In parallel, the Government increased its clampdown on local leaders, used military tribunals to try those accused of insurrection, and ramped-up military operations. The SLA and JEM

continued an aggressive campaign against the army, and the Government escalated a counterinsurgency campaign utilizing Arab militias—including some from neighboring countries—who then burned, looted, and raped throughout the region. On December 15, a ceasefire agreement signed on September 21 broke down, leading to an escalation of fighting. Reports indicate more than 600,000 civilians had been internally displaced, an estimated 100,000 refugees fled to neighboring Chad, and as many as 3,000 unarmed civilians were killed by year's end. The Government continued to refer to the SLA and JEM as "rebels" and "bandits."

There were numerous reports of government-supported killings in Darfur. For example, in July, a spokesperson for the SLA operating in Darfur claimed that more than 50 civilians had been killed in government attacks on villages during aerial bombings. There were reports that government planes bombed Kornoy and Tina, on the border with Chad, daily. AI reported that hundreds of civilians, mainly from sedentary groups such as the Fur, Zaghawa, Masalit, and Tungur have been killed or injured.

Government-supported militias raided villages in Darfur, driving thousands of refugees from their lands and many over the border into Chad. For example, on July 25, after an attack on Shoba, a Fur village south of Kabkabiya, AI reported that at least 51 villagers, including many elders, were killed. On August 5, according to the SLA, pro-government militias killed approximately 300 civilians in Kuttum, and destroyed and burned houses and shops.

Reports of attacks by government-supported Arab nomad militias (the "janjaweed"), acting in support of its counterinsurgency campaign, point toward a government-sanctioned policy of targeting ethnic groups represented in the SLA and the JEM.

There were reports that the Government and government-supported militia tortured and beat persons suspected of supporting the rebellion in Darfur (see Section 1.c.).

Government forces obstructed the flow of humanitarian assistance to the Darfur region. Many thousands of civilians fled into Chad and were without access to any aid because of continued fighting. Although the Government announced new travel regulations in September for the south, by year's end the humanitarian assistance organizations were routinely denied access to most areas of Darfur. By year's end, there was no access to any area in North Darfur outside of El Fasher, and little in West and South Darfur. In December, WFP planes were denied permission to fly to Darfur.

The rebel groups in Darfur were also responsible for abuses during the year. In February, SLA rebels killed a government agricultural engineer in Jebel Mara.

In March, SLA rebels attacked the city of Tina on the border with Chad, killing a government customs official, injuring others, and looting the customs office. The attack followed the announcement on March 25 that talks had collapsed between the Government and the SLA.

On October 20, nine local humanitarian aid workers were killed in the western Darfur region. Unknown persons attacked while the workers were driving a truck containing food.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for freedoms of thought, expression, and of the press "as regulated by law;" however, the Government severely restricted these rights in practice. Government detentions, intimidation, and surveillance of journalists and an increased number of suspensions of newspapers continued to inhibit open, public discussion of political issues. Journalists practiced self-censorship, and the Government confiscated entire issues of newspapers if it objected to an article.

There were a large number of daily newspapers, mainly in urban areas, and differing political views were reflected to some extent. Several newspapers also reprinted articles from the international press, some of which were critical of government policies. There was one government-controlled newspaper in Arabic. In July, the Government launched its own English daily, the Sudan Vision. A number of independent publications were under intensive scrutiny during the year and experienced intimidation, interruption, and arrest of their editors.

The Government directly controlled radio and television and required that they reflect government policies. Television has a permanent military censor to ensure that the news reflected official views. There were no privately

owned television or radio stations, although the Government and private investors jointly owned one television cable company. The Government often charged that the international, and particularly the Western, media had an anti-Sudan and anti-Islam bias. Some foreign radio stations were available in the country.

In spite of the restrictions on ownership of satellite dishes (see Section 1.f.), citizens had access to foreign electronic media; the Government did not jam foreign radio signals. In addition to domestic and satellite television services, there was a pay cable network, which directly rebroadcast uncensored Cable News Network, the British Broadcasting Company, the London-based, Saudi-owned Middle East Broadcasting Corporation, Dubai-TV, Kuwait-TV, and a variety of other foreign programs.

The Government exercised control of news reporting, particularly of political topics, the war, and criticism of the Government, especially over government actions and policies in Darfur, through the National Press Council and security forces. Newspapers were prohibited from publishing articles about the war with the exception of information provided by the Ministry of Defense or official government statements. Nevertheless, the local press did report the findings of the CPMT investigations.

A number of journalists and editors were arrested and detained during the year. For example, on May 6, security forces arrested Nhial Bol, the Khartoum Monitor's managing editor. Bol was detained for approximately 24 hours for questioning about articles written on the demolition of a church in Khartoum North, the relationship between Christianity and Islam, and the position of Islam on traditional drinks such as Merissa. On May 10, the Government fined Bol \$400 (1 million SD), and ordered that Bol should be jailed for inciting religious discord. Bol was released on May 11, when his family paid the fine.

On May 7, security forces arrested and beat Yusuf al-Beshir Musa, a journalist for Al-Sahafa, for publishing "false reports" on the conflict in Darfur. He was released on May 11 and re-arrested on May 12.

On December 18, police detained the Al-Jazeera director, Islam Salih Belo, and closed the Al-Jazeera office in Khartoum because of reports published on the conflict in Darfur, landmine victims, and tuberculosis issues. Belo was detained incommunicado for 7 days. The National Press Council encouraged the lifting of their license, and the office remained closed and its equipment confiscated at year's end.

The National Press Council applied the Press law and was directly responsible to the President. It was charged with licensing newspapers, setting press policy, and responding to complaints. In the event of a complaint, it can give a newspaper a warning or suspend it for up to 15 days. It also can suspend a newspaper indefinitely and suspend journalists for up to 2 weeks. The National Press Council consisted of 21 members: 7 selected by the President; 5 from the National Assembly; 7 directly elected by journalists from the Journalists' Union; and 2 selected by the Journalists' Union leadership. Observers believed the Journalist's Union was government-controlled. The National Press Council was active in suspending journalists and newspapers during the year.

During the year, the National Security Offices imposed restrictions on press freedom by suspending publications, confiscating already printed editions, conducting pre-publication censorship, and restricting government advertising to pro-government media only. Numerous newspapers were closed, some repeatedly, during the year, including al-Awan, al-Ayam, Al-Azminha, al-Captain, al-Sahafa, al-Watan, the Khartoum Monitor, and Raai al-Shaab. For example, on May 10, during the trial of Nhial Bol, a court banned the Khartoum Monitor for publishing for 2 months because of "blasphemous" articles. After being allowed to publish once on July 11 and then being closed again the next day, the Khartoum Monitor resumed daily publication on October 15 only to be suspended again on November 24 and charged with "crimes against the state" for publishing articles on slavery, questioning the independence of the judiciary, and reporting on the peace negotiations between the Government and the SPLM/A. The Khartoum Monitor remained closed at year's end.

In September, the Government accused the al-Alwan of publishing material to "arouse sedition and disorder" following the printing of an interview with the spouse and son of Turabi that was critical of President Bashir and his deputy. Later in September, Al-Awan was suspended for publishing "false information" about the release of political detainees, and for "crimes against the state." Al-Alwan resumed publication in October.

On several occasions during the year, security forces seized copies of newspapers. For example, on May 6 and 7, the Government confiscated copies of al-Sahafa for a May 3 article containing reports of the Foreign Minister accusing Chad and Kenya of being involved in the unrest in Darfur, and on July 29, the Government confiscated all copies of al-Sahafa in retaliation against its July 28 report of the killing of 12 conscripts and injury of 31 student conscripts in a car accident, which the PDF spokesperson denied. In September, the NPC suspended Al-Sahafa for 3 days for violation of Islamic law for printing an airline's advertisement that promoted wine in France.

After President's Bashir's announcements in October about easing press restrictions, newspapers were not closed down while a court case was lodged against it; however, the security forces closed newspapers, and delayed investigations and court hearings, which resulted in significant financial losses for the newspapers before a charge was substantiated.

Internet access, which was potentially monitored, was available through two Internet service providers. There were no reported government restrictions on Internet access.

The Government restricted academic freedom. In public universities, the Government appointed the vice-chancellors who were responsible for running the institutions. While many professors lectured and wrote in opposition to the Government, they exercised self-censorship. Private universities were not subject to direct government control; however, professors also exercised self-censorship. The Government continued to determine the curriculum.

Although the Government introduced Student Discipline and Code of Conduct Acts in many universities in January 2002, which required strict Islamic standards of dress and association, and applied to Muslim and non-Muslim students alike (see Section 2.c.), the dress standard was not strictly enforced. In May, the Government announced that it would provide uniforms to female university students that were "modest"; however, the Government had not done so by year's end.

There were no further developments in the following 2002 cases: the February suspension of a student human rights activist from Omdurman College of Technological Science for carrying out human rights activities; and the March arrest and severe beating by security forces of a male student in Khartoum.

In July, student elections were held peacefully at the University of Khartoum, and the anti-government coalition won the elections. Classes at the University of Khartoum re-opened in April and May after being closed in November 2002 following student protests that called for student union elections.

The SPLM/A and the NDA provided few opportunities for journalists to report on their activities. The SPLM/A restricted the freedom of speech among populations under its control.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution provides for freedom of assembly; however, the Government continued to severely restrict this freedom. In 2001, the Government declared a ban on all rallies and public demonstrations in the country, and announced that no permits would be authorized or issued. In September, President Bashir announced a lifting of these restrictions; however, the continuing National Security Emergency decree and the Criminal Procedure Act, which requires government approval for gatherings involving more than five persons, effectively circumscribed the right of assembly. The authorities generally permitted only government-authorized gatherings and routinely denied permission for or disrupted gatherings they view as politically oriented. In October, a political rally was held on the grounds of the University of Khartoum with no interference.

Islamic orders associated with opposition political parties, particularly the Ansar (the Umma Party) and Khatimia (the DUP) continued to be denied permission to hold large public gatherings during most of the year.

Security forces used excessive force, including beatings, tear gas, and firing of live ammunition to disperse unapproved demonstrations. For example, in March, police killed one student from Al-Nilain University and another from the University for Science and Technology while dispersing demonstrations against war in Iraq.

No action was taken against security forces that forcibly dispersed demonstrations or meetings in 2002 or 2001.

The Constitution provides for freedom of association; however, the Government severely restricted this right in practice. There were 20 officially registered political parties; however, the law includes restrictions that effectively prohibit traditional political parties if they were linked to armed opposition to the Government. The amended Political Parties Act allows some former banned political parties to resume their activities; however, the parties still were unable to participate in elections unless the registrar was notified in writing. In November 2002, security forces arrested Hassan Satti, a loyalist of Hassan al-Turabi, for hosting an "Iftar" dinner, an act the Government stated was a ruse for a political party meeting. Satti was detained for 10 days and released without charges. Observers believed that the Government controlled professional associations.

The Government restricted diplomatic, international, and regional organizations' contact with local political

organizations that the Government considered to be waging war against it. In September, security forces arrested and detained six or seven lawyers for discussing the conflict in Darfur and providing "false information" to a foreign official; the lawyers were released following the signing of the ceasefire in Darfur in September.

c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion; however, the Government severely restricted this right in practice. The Constitution states that "Shari'a and custom are the sources of legislation," and in practice the Government treated Islam as the state religion and declared that Islam must inspire the country's laws, institutions, and policies. Ten southern states, whose population was mostly non-Muslim, were exempted from Shari'a.

There were reports that security forces harassed and at times threatened use of violence against persons on the basis of religious beliefs and activities. There continued to be reports that Christian secondary school students in Khartoum were not allowed to continue their compulsory military service because they attended church. Without this, they were barred from higher education. Codes of dress and association based on strict Islamic standards were introduced to universities in 2002; although not strictly enforced, they reflected an effort by the Government to force religious observance on male and female members of opposition and non-Muslim student groups. During the year, Islamic students harassed, beat, and otherwise abused non-Sudanese African students.

In July, 14 leading Islamic scholars and 2 university professors issued a fatwah declaring communists, socialists, and others adhering to non-Shari'a (non-Islamic) law as apostates who deserved to be killed. More than 400 professionals and intellectuals protested the announcement of the fatwah in a public announcement.

The Government placed the same restrictions on churches as it did on nonreligious corporations. Religious groups must register to be recognized or worship legally. Unregistered religious groups found it impossible to construct a place of worship and were harassed by the Government. Registration reportedly was very difficult to obtain in practice, and the Government did not treat all groups equally in the approval of such registrations and licenses.

The Catholic Church has not registered under the 1994 act requiring religious organizations to register, maintaining that previous registrations in 1905 and 1963 remained valid. As a result, its marriage licenses are not recognized in the country. The Catholic Church has the Vatican authorize the licenses after issuing them locally.

Authorities continued to restrict the activities of Christians, followers of traditional indigenous beliefs, and other non-Muslims, as well as certain Islamic groups. The Government generally was least restrictive of Christian groups that historically had a presence in the country, including Coptic, Roman Catholics, and Greek Orthodox and was more restrictive of newer Christian groups. Although the Government considered itself an Islamic government, restrictions often were placed on the religious freedoms of Muslims, particularly on those orders linked to opposition to the Government.

Government approval was required for the use and construction of houses of worship. Applications to build mosques generally were granted in practice; however, the process for applications for non-Muslim churches was more difficult. The Government did not authorize the construction of any churches in the Khartoum area or in the district capitals; the Government often claimed that local Islamic community objections restricted the issuance of permits. While the Government permitted non-Muslims to participate in services in existing, authorized places of worship, the Government continued to deny permission for the construction of any Roman Catholic churches, although some other Christian groups have received permission. However, the Government permitted some makeshift structures in displaced persons camps to be used for Roman Catholic services.

Under the Criminal Act, non-Muslims may convert to Islam; however, conversion by a Muslim was punishable by death. In practice, authorities usually subjected converts to intense scrutiny, ostracization, intimidation, and torture, and encouraged them to leave the country.

PDF trainees, including non-Muslims, were indoctrinated in the Islamic faith. In prisons and juvenile detention facilities, government officials and government-supported Islamic NGOs pressured and offered inducements to non-Muslim inmates to convert. Some persons in the government-controlled camps for IDPs reportedly at times were pressured to convert to Islam. Children, including non-Muslim children, in camps for vagrant minors were required to study the Koran, and there was pressure on non-Muslims children to convert to Islam. Unlike in previous years, there were no credible reports of forced circumcision during the year. There were credible reports that some children from Christian and other non-Muslim families, captured and sold into slavery, were forcibly converted to Islam.

Muslims could proselytize freely in the government-controlled areas, but non-Muslims were forbidden to proselytize.

Authorities sometimes harassed foreign missionaries and other religiously oriented organizations, and delayed their requests for work permits and residence visas. For example, Catholic priests in the north continued to have problems obtaining visas and internal security agents occasionally subjected them to interrogations.

The Government required instruction in Islam in public schools in the north. In public schools in areas where Muslims were a minority, students had a choice of studying Islam or Christianity. Christian courses were not offered in the majority of public schools, ostensibly due to a lack of teachers or Christian students, which meant that many Christian students attended Islamic courses.

Children who have been abandoned or whose parentage was unknown--regardless of presumed religious origin--were considered Muslims and citizens and could be adopted only by Muslims (see Section 1.f.).

In December, the Inter-Religious Council (SIRC), a government-sponsored NGO created in November 2002 to foster religious dialogue, formed a committee to promote religious freedom and investigate alleged violations. For example, SIRC worked with the Government during the year on compensation to the Catholic Church for property confiscated by the Government. In May, the Government permitted the airing on the state-controlled national television station of a film on the life of Jesus Christ.

Minority religious rights were not protected. In government-controlled areas of the south, there continued to be credible evidence of prejudice in favor of Muslims and an unwritten policy of Islamization of public institutions, despite an official policy of local autonomy and federalism. Some non-Muslims, and Muslims not in the ruling party, lost their jobs in the civil service, the judiciary, and other professions. Few non-Muslim university graduates found government jobs. Some non-Muslim businessmen complained of petty harassment and discrimination in the awarding of government contracts and trade licenses. Reports continued that Muslims (particularly supporters of the NIF) received preferential treatment for the limited services provided by the Government, including access to medical care.

Aerial bombings by the government in southern rebel-held areas have struck hospitals, schools, mosques, Christian churches, and interrupted religious services (see Section 1.g.).

In SPLA-controlled areas, Christians, Muslims, and followers of traditional indigenous beliefs generally worshiped freely; however, many of the region's Muslim residents have departed voluntarily over the years. The SPLM officially favored secular government; however, Christians dominated the SPLM and local SPLM authorities often had a very close relationship with local Christian religious authorities.

For a more detailed discussion, see the [2003 International Religious Freedom Report](#).

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution provides for these rights; however, the Government severely restricted these rights in practice.

Movement generally was unhindered for citizens outside the war zones; however, travelers who failed to produce an identity card at checkpoints risked arrest. Foreigners needed permits for domestic travel outside of Khartoum, which often were difficult to obtain and sometimes refused. Foreigners must register with the police on entering the country, obtain permission to move from one location to another, and re-register at each new location within 3 days of arrival. Foreign NGO staffs at times had problems obtaining entry visas as well as work or travel permits once they had entered the country.

Foreign diplomats could travel to many locations with a government escort; however, the Government restricted their access to the areas of conflict. In September, the Government eased travel restrictions for diplomats and only required notification, no permits, for some states. For air travel to Damazin, Dongala, Halfa, Kadugli, Juba, Kassala, Malakal, Port Sudan, and Wau only notification is required, while travel by land or outside these towns requires a written travel permit. All other areas require written travel permits, including all regions of Darfur. On November 9, the Humanitarian Assistance Commission prevented a foreign diplomat from boarding a WFP flight to Nyala, Darfur, allegedly for not having filled in the correct forms.

The Government denied exit visas to some categories of persons, including policemen and physicians, and

maintained lists of political figures and other citizens who were not permitted to travel abroad. For example, the Government has banned all travel by several outspoken human rights activists in Khartoum. Some former political detainees have been forbidden to travel outside Khartoum. The Government claimed it had canceled the exit visa requirement for its citizens; however, in practice the Government still denied travel privileges to certain individuals when they arrived at exit ports (such as airports). For example, in January, the Government stopped women belonging to the Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace Program, who were trying to leave for a workshop in Nairobi. None of the eight women were allowed to leave. Similarly, in June, the Government stopped members of the Nuba Women's Ru'ya Association from traveling to a conference in Nuba; the Government later occupied their offices in Khartoum, which remained closed at year's end.

The Government denied exit visas to NDA representatives during the year.

Women cannot travel abroad without the permission of their husbands or male guardians; however, this prohibition was not enforced strictly, especially for National Congress members.

The SPLM/A restricted freedom of movement among populations under its control. Citizens from the north or from government-controlled areas reportedly were denied permission to enter SPLM areas and were treated as foreigners. In the early months of the year, the SPLM/A would not allow northern interpreters to accompany the CPMT investigation teams into SPLM/A held area; however, there were no reports of such restrictions after April. Insurgent movements in the south also required foreign NGO personnel to obtain permission before traveling to areas that they controlled; however, they generally granted such permission. NGO workers who have worked in government-held areas encountered problems receiving permission to work or travel in insurgent-held areas.

There were estimates that up to 4 million persons were displaced internally due to the civil war. The U.N. estimated that at least 600,000 persons had been displaced by the conflict in Darfur.

Tens of thousands of persons, largely southerners and westerners displaced by famine and civil war, continued to live in squatter slums in the Khartoum area. Although the Khartoum state government announced plans in 2002 to upgrade conditions in some camps and a new planned settlement area, the continued forcible displacement of tens of thousands of southerners during the year, without real resettlement options, marked a decline in the Government's treatment of displaced persons. Also, in October, UNDP reported that the Government forced those who were supposed to be relocated to pay large sums of money to move to a home. In October, thousands were left without homes and were forced to forego school and jobs while they waited to be relocated. The Federal Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs (FMHA) was created during the year to guide NGO activities for IDPs although it is not yet clear that the ministry's contribution will be a positive one.

In November, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that there were 572,061 Sudanese refugees in neighboring countries, largely due to the conflict in the south. The largest number was in Uganda, with 223,079. At year's end, there were approximately 100,000 refugees in Chad from Darfur. Refugees were also present in Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Kenya.

The law provides for the granting of asylum and refugee status to persons who meet the definition in the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol. In practice, the Government generally provided protection against refoulement and granted refugee status and asylum; however, there was no standard determination procedure and there were reports of the forced return of refugees to their countries of origin. The Government cooperated with the UNHCR and other humanitarian assistance organizations and accorded refugees generally good treatment. The UNHCR reported that there were approximately 327,000 refugees in the country, primarily from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Chad, Uganda, DRC, and Somalia. Approximately 150,000 refugees were in camps, and the rest were scattered in urban areas throughout the country. The Government also provides temporary protection to certain individuals who do not qualify as refugees or asylees; however, no statistics were available for the year.

Fighting between the Government and the NDA along the eastern border with Eritrea delayed the repatriation process of longtime Eritrean refugees; however, most Eritrean refugees that lived near the border voluntarily returned to Eritrea. At year's end, more than 106,000 had been repatriated since the 2000 agreement with the Eritrean government, and there were reportedly more than 300,000 Eritreans still in the country.

There were some reports that government officials mistreated refugees, including beatings and arbitrary arrests. Refugees could not become resident aliens or citizens, regardless of their length of stay. The Government allowed a large number of refugees to work.

In February, the UNHCR reported a number of Ethiopians arrested in citywide sweeps. According to government officials, they had lost their refugee status; however, they were subsequently released from prison and allowed to remain in the country. In 2002, UNHCR reported that security authorities had arrested, fined, and deported many Eritreans in Khartoum for alleged conspiracy with the Government of Eritrea to pass information on the mobilization of government forces. During the year, government authorities claimed the Eritreans were deported because they no longer qualified as refugees.

Improved security in the south due to the ceasefires has increased the return of displaced populations into areas of origin that have been severely affected by the war and lacking basic services. There were reports that a number of refugees and displaced persons voluntarily returned to the country during the year, particularly to the Nuba Mountains region.

Since 2001, more than 12,000 pre-1991 Ethiopian refugees chose to return with UNHCR assistance. There were reports that approximately 600 Ethiopians remained in camps in the East and unconfirmed reports of 12-13,000 refugees in urban areas.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The Constitution provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully; however, in practice citizens had no genuine opportunity to change their government. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held in December 2000, and there were allegations of serious irregularities, including official interference, electoral fraud, inadequate opportunities for all voters to register, and inadequate election monitoring. All major opposition parties boycotted the election. President Bashir was elected to another 5-year term, and the NC/NIF won 340 out of 360 seats in Parliament in the deeply flawed process.

In 1999, President Bashir disbanded the Parliament, suspended portions of the Constitution, and decreed a state of national emergency, which suspended basic civil liberties. Parliament resumed in February 2001; however, with 98 percent of the Parliament in the ruling National Congress Party, the Parliament did not act independently of the President. The state of emergency remained in effect at year's end, and on December 29, Parliament voted to extend it for another year.

The law allows the existence of political parties; however, the Government continued routinely to deny permission for and disrupt gatherings that it viewed as politically oriented (see Section 2.b.). Security forces arrested, detained, and on occasion, beat political opponents during the year (see Sections 1.c. and 1.d.).

The federal system of government was developing a structure of 26 states, with governors and senior state officials appointed by the President. The Government considered this strategy as a possible inducement to the rebels for accommodation through a principle of regional autonomy; however, southerners were underrepresented in the central Government, and local appointees were not universally viewed as representative of their constituencies.

Women had the right to vote. There were 12 women members in the 360-seat Parliament. There were two female ministers: The Minister of Social Welfare and a member of the Council of Ministers. There also were two female State Ministers.

There were approximately 55 southerners in the 360-seat Parliament, and approximately 30 Christians in the Council of Ministers.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Due to government restrictions, there were only two independent domestic human rights group--the Sudan Human Rights Group (SHRG) and the Sudan Human Rights Organization (SHRO). The SHRO operated out of Cairo. There also were two local NGOs that addressed health concerns related to the practice of FGM and other "traditional" practices (see Section 5).

The Government was uncooperative with and unresponsive to human right groups, and did not meet with them during the year. The Government harassed, intimidated, and detained its members.

On June 19, security officers arrested Ghazi Suleiman, chair of the SHRG and leader of the political party National Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (NARD), and 36 political activists meeting at Suleiman's home. Although

the 36 were released after a few hours, Suleiman was detained for 2 days. On July 2, security forces arrested Suleiman for his involvement in the "Khartoum Document," a statement by political activists and civil society representatives on the peace process, and in August, Suleiman was again arrested, and detained for 15 days without charges.

Local humanitarian aid workers were killed during the year (see Section 1.g.).

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports of government attacks on NGOs (see Section 1.g.).

In January, AI visited the country and issued its findings in a report published in July. AI had not been permitted to visit the country in 13 years.

While there were improvements in access to conflict areas in the south, the Government restricted international humanitarian organizations' access to the Darfur region (see Section 1.g.).

Rebels reportedly abducted NGO workers in Darfur (see Section 1.b.).

In April, Gerhart Baum, the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Sudan, reported to the U.N. Human Rights Commission that "the country remains under the iron-tight grip of the omnipresent security apparatus, which continues to enjoy virtual impunity." He expressed particular concern about the conflict in Darfur; however, his mandate was not renewed after April.

The Human Rights Advisory Council, a government body whose rapporteur was the Solicitor General for Public Law, continued its role in addressing human rights problems within the Government. The Council was composed of representatives of human rights offices in 22 government ministries and agencies. While the Council was charged with investigating human rights complaints, its effectiveness was hampered by lack of cooperation on the part of some ministry and agency offices.

Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The Constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, or religious creed; however, discrimination against women and ethnic minorities continued. Mechanisms for social redress, especially with respect to violence against women and children, were ineffective.

Women

Violence against women was a problem; however, since reliable statistics did not exist, its prevalence was unknown. Many women were reluctant to file formal complaints against such abuse, although it was a legal ground for divorce. The police normally did not intervene in domestic disputes.

Displaced women from the south were vulnerable to harassment, rape, and sexual abuse. The Government did not address the problem of violence against women, nor was it discussed publicly. The punishment for rape under the Criminal Act varied from 100 lashes to 10 years imprisonment to death. In most cases, convictions were not publicized; however, observers believed that sentences often were less than the maximum provided for by law. Pregnant unmarried women and young girls were convicted during the year of adultery (see Section 1.c.).

FGM was widespread, particularly in the north. An estimated 90 percent or more of girls and women in the north have undergone FGM, with consequences that have included severe urinary problems, infections, and even death. Infibulation, the most severe type of FGM, was the most common type. Usually it was performed on girls between the ages of 4 and 7 by traditional practitioners in improvised, unsanitary conditions, which caused severe pain, trauma, and risk of infection to the child. No form of FGM was illegal under the Criminal Code; however, the health law forbade doctors and midwives from performing infibulation. There were reports that women displaced from the south to the north were imposing FGM on their daughters, even if they themselves have not been subjected to it, especially among IDPs who have acculturated to the north. A small but growing number of urban, educated families were abandoning the practice completely. A larger number of families, in a compromise with tradition, have adopted the least severe form of FGM, "sunna," as an alternative to infibulation. The Government neither arrested nor prosecuted any persons for violating the health law against infibulation. The Government does not support FGM, and it has introduced information about FGM in some public education curriculums. One local NGO was working to eradicate FGM.

In August, there was a highly publicized government-sponsored 3-day conference on FGM. The Minister of Health spoke out against the practice, and the media provided extensive coverage of FGM for the first time. President Bashir announced publicly that he supported the "sunna" form; later his spokesperson said he had been misquoted.

Prostitution is illegal but widespread.

Trafficking in women was a problem (see Section 6.f.).

The law prohibits sexual harassment. Although it was reported to have occurred during the year, reliable statistics were not available.

Some aspects of the law discriminated against women, including certain provisions of Shari'a interpreted and applied by the Government, and many traditional law practices. In accordance with Shari'a, a Muslim woman has the right to hold and dispose of her own property without interference. Women were assured an inheritance from their parents; however, a daughter inherited half the share of a son, and a widow inherited a smaller percent than did her children. It was much easier for men to initiate legal divorce proceedings than for women. These rules only applied to Muslims and not to those of other faiths for whom religious or tribal laws applied.

Although a Muslim man may marry a non-Muslim, a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim unless he converted to Islam; however, this prohibition was not observed or enforced in areas of the south not controlled by the Government or among Nubans. Unofficial, nonregistered marriages, known as "orfy" or traditional weddings, are valid legally but do not guarantee the wife's legal rights. For example, in an orfy customary marriage, a woman is not entitled to alimony or pension, has no judicial protection without official recognition by her spouse, and must file a legal petition to establish her children's parentage. Women cannot travel abroad without the permission of their husbands or male guardians; however, this prohibition was not enforced strictly, especially for National Congress members.

During the year, the law was changed to allow citizen women who were married to foreigners to pass their citizenship to their children if they so chose. In the past, the children were automatically deemed to have the citizenship of their father.

A number of government directives required that women in public places and government offices and female students and teachers conform to what the Government deemed an Islamic dress code (see Section 2.a.). At the least, this necessitated wearing a head covering; however, enforcement of the dress code regulations was inconsistent.

A Khartoum-based NGO reported that female students were threatened with rape while detained at police stations. In February 2002, there were a number of incidents in which young women were detained at police stations and sometimes beaten for alleged improprieties of appearance or behavior.

Women generally were not discriminated against in the pursuit of employment; however, women were not allowed to work after 10:00 pm, in theory limiting their employment opportunities. Nonetheless, many women did work after 10:00 pm, and in official positions such as airport security.

Children

The Government commitment to children's rights and welfare was uneven throughout the country. Education was compulsory through grade eight; however, according to UNICEF, approximately half of school-age children attended primary school. There were wide disparities among states and some gender disparity especially in the eastern and western regions; for example, enrollment was 78 percent in Khartoum State and only 26 percent in South Darfur State. In the north, boys and girls generally had equal access to education (50 percent and 47 percent respectively), although many families with restricted income choose to send sons and not daughters to school. Although there was little data on enrollment rates, it was estimated that the vast majority of the school age children of IDPs were not receiving an education because of inadequate facilities or because they could not afford the fees. Nomadic groups also were disadvantaged. Although the gender gap in enrollment between boys and girls was only 3 to 5 percent in favor of the boys, girls were more affected by early withdrawal due to family obligations or early marriage. In the urban areas of the south, primary school age children in basic education were estimated at 68 percent of all boys and 67 percent of all girls. The Government officially required that young men between the ages of 17 and 19 enter military or national service to be able to receive a certificate upon leaving secondary school; the certificate was a requirement for entry into a university. More than 50 percent of university students

were women, in part because men were conscripted for war and in part because women in general scored higher on the entrance exams.

The Government operated camps for vagrant children. Police typically send homeless children who have committed crimes to these camps, where they were detained for indefinite periods. Health care and schooling at the camps generally were poor, and basic living conditions often were primitive. All of the children in the camps, including non-Muslims, must study the Koran, and there was pressure on non-Muslims to convert to Islam (see Section 2.c.). Male teenagers in the camps often were conscripted into the PDF, including some girls in the south. There were reports that the Government's PDF seized underage recruits from the streets of Khartoum. Conscripts faced significant hardship and abuse in military service, often serving on the frontline. There were reports that abducted, homeless, and displaced children were discouraged from speaking languages other than Arabic or practicing religions other than Islam.

FGM was performed frequently on girls (see Section 5, Women).

A large number of children suffered abuse, including abduction, enslavement, and forced conscription (see Sections 1.b. and 6.c.). The Government forcibly conscripted young men and boys into the military forces to fight in the civil war. For example, on October 8, government-supported militiamen abducted three civilian boys from the El Lafa Souk, Kalakla, in Khartoum. Acting under the orders of Paulino Matieb, leader of the South Sudan Unity Movement (SSUM) and commander of the Government's SSDF, the militia conscripted the boys into the SSUM. The CPMT confirmed these abductions and reported that they were part of a broader campaign of forced conscription and extortion (particularly targeting Nuer boys) that continued in Khartoum. Government authorities frequently carried out conscription by raiding buses and other public places to seize young men. No one was jailed during the year for evading compulsory military service.

Rebel factions have conscripted citizens forcibly, including high school age children. During the year, the SPLM/A engaged in efforts to demobilize child soldiers; however, there were reports that child soldiers were involved in military incidents during December 2002, which raised concerns that the SPLM/A again was using forced recruitment of children. UNICEF reported that an estimated 7,000-8,000 child soldiers remained with the SPLM/A.

The ICRC cooperated with UNICEF to remove child soldiers during the year.

Persons with Disabilities

The Government did not discriminate against persons with disabilities, but has not enacted any special legislation for persons with disabilities, such as mandating accessibility to public buildings and transportation. The law requires equal educational opportunities for persons with disabilities.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

The estimated population of 27.5 million was a multiethnic mix of more than 500 Arab and African tribes with numerous languages and dialects. Northern Muslims, who formed a majority of approximately 16 million persons, traditionally have dominated the Government. The southern ethnic groups fighting the civil war (largely followers of traditional indigenous religions or Christians) total approximately 6 million. The fighting in Darfur has been characterized in racial terms, as Arab Muslims against black African Muslims (see Section 1.g.).

The Muslim majority and the Government continued to discriminate against ethnic minorities in almost every aspect of society. Citizens in Arabic-speaking areas who did not speak Arabic experienced discrimination in education, employment, and other areas. For university admission, students completing high school were required to pass examinations in four subjects: English language; mathematics; Arabic language; and religious studies. Even at the university level, examinations in all subjects except English language were in the Arabic language, placing nonnative speakers of Arabic at a disadvantage.

There were periodic reports of intertribal abductions of women and children in the south, primarily in the Eastern Upper Nile. The abductions were part of traditional warfare in which the victor took women and children as a bounty and frequently tried to absorb them into their own tribe. There were traditional methods of negotiating and returning the women who were taken in these raids.

There were deaths in conflicts between ethnic groups, such as continued fighting between Dinka and Nuer or between Nuer tribes. Intertribal fighting among Nuer tribesmen also continued during the year.

Incitement to Acts of Discrimination

The Government and government-supported militias actively promoted hatred and discrimination.

Section 6 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

The Constitution provides for the right of association for economic and trade union purposes; however, the Government restricted this right in practice. The Government prescribed severe punishments, including the death penalty, for violations of its labor decrees. The Trade Union Act established a trade union monopoly. Only the government-controlled Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF) can function legally, and all other unions were banned. The ICFTU continued to recognize the "Legitimate" Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWLTUF), the national trade union center that functioned prior to the ban, which operated in exile.

The Government has not responded to International Labor Organization (ILO) criticism of the Trade Union Act as incompatible with the principles of freedom of association.

During the year, two union leaders were detained: Mahjoub al-Zubair was held for 3 weeks, and Haydar Zain al-Abdin was held for 1 week. Both were former leaders of the SWTUF and were active in the NDA. The former workers' union leaders arrested in 2002 were released after 3 weeks.

The law does not prohibit anti-union discrimination by employers.

SWTUF was affiliated with international labor bodies, such as the African Workers' Union and the Arab Workers' Union.

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

Labor organizing committees have the right to organize and bargain collectively; however, in practice, government control of the steering committees meant that the Government dominated the process of setting wages and working conditions. The continued absence of labor legislation allowing for union meetings, the filing of grievances, and other union activity greatly reduced the value of these formal rights. Local union officials have raised some grievances with employers, although few raised them with the Government. There were credible reports that the Government routinely intervened to manipulate professional, trade union, and student union elections (see Section 2.a.).

The Labor Code, which strengthened government control over trade unions and continues to deny trade unions autonomy to exercise their basic right to organize or to bargain collectively. The code provides that unions should be democratic, national, and neutral, defend the welfare of their members, and should raise productivity. There was nothing in the code regarding organizational structure, strikes, or term limits. Union funds were subject to control by the auditor general.

A tripartite committee comprising representatives of the Government, the SWTUF, and business set wages. Specialized labor courts adjudicated standard labor disputes; however, the Ministry of Labor has the authority to refer a dispute to compulsory arbitration. Although the Government agreed to a 15 percent salary increase during the year, the increase was not applied to all workers.

The Government continued to summarily dismiss military personnel as well as civilian government employees whose loyalty it considered suspect.

Strikes were banned and were considered illegal unless the labor office granted approval, which has never been given. In most cases, employees who tried to strike were subject to employment termination. Although there have been no general strikes since 1998, there were a number of local strikes during the year, particularly by teachers who were not receiving their salaries.

There is one export processing zone located in Port Sudan.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Bonded Labor

The Constitution prohibits forced or bonded labor, including by children; however, there were reports that such practices continued (see Section 6.d and 6.f). The enslavement of women and children, particularly in the war zones, and their transport to the central and northern parts of the country continued.

Some NGOs reported that victims of government bombings and of the civil war in general who fled to government-controlled peace camps were subjected to forced labor.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that militia raiders, "murahileen," with the support of forces directly under the control of government authorities, systematically raided villages and captured women and children as remuneration for their services in Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile. The Government took no action to hold those responsible for the abductions and continued to support tribal militias. Abductees frequently were forced to herd cattle, work in the fields, fetch water, dig wells, or do housework. They also were subjected to arbitrary punishment, torture, and rape, and at times, killed. These practices had a pronounced racial aspect, as the victims exclusively were black southerners and members of indigenous tribes of the Nuba Mountains. There were reports of the sale and purchase of children, some in alleged slave markets. The Government continued to deny that slavery and forced labor existed but acknowledged that abductions occurred (see Section 1.b.). There were unconfirmed reports of captured women and children during raids by the government-supported "janjaweed" in Darfur during the year.

Both the Government and rebel factions continued to conscript men and boys forcibly into the fighting forces (see Section 5).

The SPLA/M and affiliated forces continued to force southern men to work as laborers or porters.

d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

The Constitution provides that the Government protect children from exploitation; however, the Government did not enforce the provisions and child labor was a serious problem. Although the legal minimum age for workers was 18 years, the law was not enforced in practice. Children as young as 11 or 12 years of age worked in a number of factories, particularly outside the capital, including the factories at Um Ruwaba that produced edible oils. In addition, severe poverty has produced widespread child labor in the informal economy. For example, children are commonly seen washing dishes or cleaning tables at restaurants, and collecting money for mini-bus drivers. In rural areas, children traditionally assisted their families with agricultural work from a very young age.

In March, the Government ratified ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor and ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment; however, the Government has not taken any action to investigate abuses or protect child workers.

There were credible reports that children were taken as slaves (see Section 6.c.). There were also reports that children were forcibly conscripted (see Section 5).

Child labor existed in SPLM/SPLA-held areas, particularly in the agricultural sectors. Child labor in such areas was exacerbated by lack of schools, extreme poverty, and the lack of an effective legal minimum age for workers.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The legislated minimum wage was enforced by the Ministry of Labor, which maintained field offices in most major cities. Employers generally respected the minimum wage. Workers who were denied the minimum wage could file a grievance with the local Ministry of Labor field office, which then was required to investigate and take appropriate action if there was a violation of the law. The Ministry of Finance agreed to raise the minimum wage from \$26 (6,881 SD) to \$28 (7,410 SD) per month; however, it remained an insufficient amount to provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family and the increase was not applied to all workers' wages. There were reports during the year that some workers were not paid their regular wages.

The workweek was limited by law to an 8-hour day, with a day of rest on Friday, which generally was respected.

Although the laws prescribe health and safety standards, working conditions generally were poor, and enforcement by the Ministry of Labor was minimal. The law does not address the right of workers to remove themselves from dangerous work situations without loss of employment.

Legal foreign workers had the same labor rights as domestic workers. Illegal workers had no such protections and, as a result, typically worked for lower wages in worse conditions than legal workers. Southern IDPs generally occupied the lowest paying occupations and were subject to economic exploitation in rural and urban industries and activities.

f. Trafficking in Persons

Although the law does not prohibit specifically trafficking in persons, the Constitution specifically prohibits slavery and forced labor; however, slavery, forced labor, and trafficking in persons persisted, particularly affecting women and children (see Sections 1.b. and 6.c.). There continued to be credible reports that government and government supported militias abducted women and children for their use as domestic servants, forced labor, or sex slaves; the majority of abductees were taken to the government-controlled part of the country.

Libyans have been implicated in the purchase of Sudanese slaves, particularly women and children who were captured by government troops. There were also reports of Sudanese boys being trafficked to Qatar as camel jockeys, and to Saudi Arabia to work as domestic servants and menial laborers.

There are credible reports that intertribal abductions of women and children continued in the south; abductees were absorbed into tribes or kept as domestic servants or sex slaves (see Section 5).

There were continuing unconfirmed reports that the SPLA forcibly recruited Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda for service in their forces.

During the past 15 years, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) kidnapped between 3,000 and 10,000 Ugandan children, took them to the southern part of the country, and forced them to become sex slaves or soldiers. In March 2002, the Government signed an agreement to stop supporting the LRA and permit Ugandan army access in the south to pursue the LRA; the agreement remained in force during the year.

The LRA continued to operate in the south and to hold a large number of child abductees during the year.